



REQUEST FOR QUALIFICATIONS (RFQ):

Professional Services Relating to Development of a Positioning and Marketing Plan for the Mansfield Downtown Partnership, Inc.

SUBMISSION DEADLINE:

Friday, January 20, 2017 at 5:00 PM

SUBMISSION CONTACT AND ADDRESS:

Ms. Cynthia van Zelm, Executive Director
Mansfield Downtown Partnership, Inc.
860.429.2740
vanzelmca@mansfieldct.org

Submissions will be accepted in electronic form only.

PURPOSE:

The Mansfield Downtown Partnership, Inc. ("Partnership") is seeking to obtain the services of a qualified Consultant who will work with staff, the Partnership Board of Directors, and key stakeholders to develop a comprehensive positioning and marketing plan for both Downtown Storrs and the Mansfield Downtown Partnership organization.

1. Downtown Storrs Positioning/Marketing Goal: To position and promote the entire Downtown as a regional arts, entertainment, dining, and recreational destination where people choose to live, work, and visit.

2. Partnership Positioning/Marketing Goal: To solidify the Partnership's "brand" as the ombudsman, concierge, and communication center – the hub of Downtown Storrs.

MANSFIELD DOWNTOWN PARTNERSHIP, INC

23 Royce Circle, PO Box 513, Storrs, CT 06268 | 860.427.2740 | mansfieldct.org/mdp | mdp@mansfieldct.org

BACKGROUND SUMMARY

The Mansfield Downtown Partnership, Inc., (a 501 (c) (3) organization) consisting of representatives from the Town of Mansfield government, the University of Connecticut (“UConn”), the Mansfield business community, and local residents was formed in 2001 to promote economic development in three areas of Mansfield, CT (Storrs Center, Four Corners, and King Hill Road). The Partnership is a membership organization with over 200 individual, business, and organizational members. The main focus for the last fifteen years has been the development of a downtown – Storrs Center – in the heart of Mansfield. The Partnership’s vision has been to create a vibrant, economically viable downtown with retail, restaurant, office, residential, and public space that attracts residents, visitors, and UConn faculty, staff, and students. The Partnership has successfully realized this vision.

While Storrs Center became synonymous with the downtown, it only encompasses the new development. Over the last two years, the Partnership has also worked to integrate other commercial properties adjacent to Storrs Center (16 businesses), the Town Hall, Mansfield Community Center, E. O. Smith High School, the south end of the UConn campus, and public trails as part of the entire downtown Storrs area. By doing this, the downtown becomes a point of destination and a regional draw. A resident or a visitor can hike a trail, see a show at UConn’s Nafe Katter Theater, and have dinner all in one day. “Downtown Storrs” is unique from other downtowns in the region and state because of all the activities you can do in the downtown, not just shopping and dining. **The inclusion of the entire downtown area is critical to the Partnership’s future marketing efforts.**

*Additional background on the Partnership and Storrs Center is included in Appendix A.
A site plan of Storrs Center is included in Appendix B.*

2016 STRATEGIC PLAN AND SITUATION ANALYSIS

When the Partnership was organized in 2001, its mission was to **envision and develop** Storrs Center. This required a distinct set of Board, committee, and staff skills. In order to **manage, promote, enhance, and protect** Downtown Storrs (the entire downtown area), a different set of skills and organizational structure is needed.

With this in mind, in September 2015, the Board of Directors adopted a mission statement to reflect its current direction:

Mission: The Mansfield Downtown Partnership seeks to foster the continued development, management, and promotion of downtown Storrs – a vibrant and economically successful community in the heart of Mansfield. The Partnership will, where appropriate and upon request, assist in the future economic development of other areas within the Town of Mansfield deemed strategic by the Town of Mansfield, the University of Connecticut, and the Partnership Board of Directors.

In October 2015, the Partnership began development of a new three-year strategic plan with an emphasis on the management, promotion, and enhancement of Downtown Storrs with the assistance of Francine Christiansen of Christiansen Consulting. Board members, Partnership staff, and key stakeholders (downtown property and business owners, EO Smith High School representatives, and

2016 STRATEGIC PLAN AND SITUATION ANALYSIS, continued

downtown peer organizations) were interviewed initially. A strategic planning steering committee was formed to guide the process, and on September 1, 2016, the Partnership Board of Directors approved the Strategic Plan. A link can be found to the Partnership's Strategic Plan at mansfieldct.org/mdp.

The Partnership confirmed its mission from 2015 while adopting what it has called its priority of priorities or unifying focus for 3 to 5 years:

To assure the Partnership is an effective and sustainable organization that is recognized as the entity:

1. Managing and supporting Downtown Storrs' economic development and operations, and
2. Positioning and promoting the Downtown as a regional arts, entertainment, dining, and recreational destination where people choose to work, live, and visit.

The Strategic Plan also adopted an initial brand statement:

Brand Statement
(Our Promise to Stakeholders)

The Partnership creates an environment in which businesses thrive and Downtown Storrs is viewed as a regional destination through the following:

- ◆ **Regional Destination:** Positioning/promoting the Downtown as an arts, entertainment, dining, and recreational destination
- ◆ **Special Events:** Designing, executing, and promoting events that draw people to the Downtown
- ◆ **Clean and Maintained:** Assuring the Downtown is maintained at a high quality
- ◆ **Tenant Mix:** Influencing the mix of businesses and residents
- ◆ **Communication Hub:** Advocating, convening, and acting as a liaison on behalf of the Downtown
- ◆ **Holistic Quality Assurance:** Coordinating all aspects of the Downtown to assure a quality experience for those who live, work, and visit

The Strategic Plan also included a set of priority goals including the goal to:

Develop/implement a Comprehensive Positioning Plan to promote Downtown Storrs as a regional arts, entertainment, dining, and recreation destination, and position the Partnership as the entity supporting Downtown Storrs' economic development, streetscape and promotion.

Key to this goal is the position of the Partnership as the ombudsman, concierge, and impartial communications center – the hub – for Downtown visitors, businesses, and residents.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

To implement this goal, the Partnership is seeking a Consultant to develop Positioning/ Marketing Plans for *both* Downtown Storrs and the Partnership organization.

Objective 1: The main objective of the Positioning and Marketing Plan for Downtown Storrs is to provide the means for the Partnership Board and staff to direct residents, visitors, UConn faculty, staff, and students to patronize the downtown businesses.

Objective 2: The main objective of the Positioning and Marketing Plan for the Partnership is to establish/brand the Partnership among the local community as the “go to” agency for promoting, enhancing, and managing Downtown Storrs. It has been determined that, in some cases, members of the community are not aware of what the Partnership does and what its role is going forward now that Storrs Center is built.

The Consultant will help develop and facilitate a process that will engage the Partnership’s Board, staff, and stakeholders. The process will ultimately lead to the adoption of final Positioning and Marketing Plans for the Partnership and for Downtown Storrs that has detailed recommendations, action steps, timeline, budget, and other required resources *and* is achievable.

The Plan will be an important tool for engaging the support of local, state, federal, and non-profit agencies, potential funders, and the private sector.

Products and services will include:

Objective 1: Positioning and Marketing Plan for Downtown Storrs:

1. Development and execution of an inclusive planning process that engages the Partnership Board of Directors, staff, committees, task forces, and stakeholders including but not limited to the Town of Mansfield, University of Connecticut, downtown property owners, downtown and community residents, and downtown businesses through interviews, surveys, focus groups, etc. as applicable;
2. Review of Partnership 2016 Strategic Plan including brand statement;
3. Evaluation of the current and future consumer market including market trends, competitors, and economic drivers;
4. Review and evaluation of Partnership’s current communication plan, outreach efforts, and target market;
5. Review and evaluation of the Partnership’s current communication tools including but not limited to website, annual report, Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, newsletter, press releases;
6. Review of master developer Storrs Center website (storrscenter.com) and logo;
7. Review of UConn Digital Media and Design student work;
8. Review of recently completed Storrs Center Public Spaces Study;
9. Evaluation of current Partnership events and how they meet one of the goals of events to bring people downtown to patronize downtown businesses;

PROJECT DESCRIPTION, continued

10. Review of other downtown communities' positioning/marketing plans and processes;
11. Coordination, as appropriate, with current Town of Mansfield branding efforts;
12. Development of a strategic and achievable Positioning/Marketing Plan (written) to establish a brand for Downtown Storrs and a summary PowerPoint presentation of the Plan;
13. The Plan for Downtown Storrs should include, but not be limited to: identification of a targeted customer market area and audience; a logo and tagline identifying the downtown including colors and graphics; communications strategies to market the downtown; and recommendations for changes to the current Partnership website;
14. The final Plan will include an implementation strategy with specific recommendations and time-lines. The timeline should include definitive goals and objectives of the Plan, against which the success of the Plan can be measured. The Plan will include clear and reasonable measures to monitor success. The Plan will include *a realistic evaluation of the cost* to implement all recommendations;

Objective 2: Positioning and Marketing Plan for the Mansfield Downtown Partnership:

1. Development and execution of an inclusive planning process that engages the Partnership Board of Directors, staff, committees, task forces, and stakeholders including but not limited to the Town of Mansfield, University of Connecticut, downtown property owners, downtown and community residents, and downtown businesses through interviews, surveys, focus groups, etc. as applicable;
2. Review of Partnership logo and tagline;
3. Development of a Positioning/Marketing Plan (written) and a summary PowerPoint presentation of the Plan;
4. The Plan should include, but not be limited to, suggested new logo and tagline (if appropriate) including colors and graphics for the Partnership and communications strategies directed to the local community to promote and advertise the role of the Partnership as the ombudsman, concierge, and communication center for the downtown;
5. The final Plan will include an implementation strategy with specific recommendations and time-lines. The timeline should include definitive goals and objectives of the Plan, against which the success of the Plan can be measured. The Plan will include clear and reasonable measures to monitor success. The Plan will include a realistic evaluation of the cost to implement all recommendations;
6. The Plan will include assessment tools to measure whether the positioning and marketing efforts have been successful.

SUBMITTALS

Submissions should include the following components:

1. Description of Consultant's firm and the firm's areas of expertise, particularly as they relate to the project described above.
2. Names and resumes of the firm's project manager and staff members who will lead and be assigned to the project.
3. Proposed scope of work, a fee schedule, and timeline for the project activities.
4. A resume of other related completed projects with at least three references attached.

SUBMITTAL CRITERIA

The following criteria shall be considered in evaluating the submissions:

1. The reputation, experience, and efficiency of the Consultant;
2. The ability of the Consultant to perform the contract or provide the goods and services within the time specified;
3. The comparative quality of the goods and services bid;
4. The Consultant's performance under similar projects;
5. The Consultant's references;
6. Fee schedule for proposed work;
7. The number and scope of conditions attached to the proposal;
8. The Consultant's interest in the project, as well as their understanding of the project scope and the specific requirements of the Partnership;
9. The Consultant's schedule of completion;
10. The application of all of the above criteria to any sub-consultants, subcontractors, or products to be utilized by the Partnership;
11. General qualifications of the firm and the qualifications of the assigned staff and interview evaluation;
12. Financial strength of the Consultant;
13. Any other criteria deemed relevant by the Partnership.

SCHEDULE

Submissions must be received electronically by the Partnership **by 5:00 pm, local time on Friday, January 20, 2017**. Proposals received after said closing time of 5:00 pm, local time, on said date will not be accepted. Proposals should include the following in the subject line: **POSITIONING/ MARKETING SERVICES**.

Submissions will be accepted via email only. Please e-mail the proposal to Cynthia van Zelm at vanzelmca@mansfieldct.org. If the submission is larger than 10 megabytes, please send it via a web service that accommodates larger documents.

The Partnership intends to “short-list” Consultants responding to this RFQ and to interview two or more Consultants to accurately assess their qualifications. The Partnership will negotiate a final scope of services and fee proposal with the selected Consultant. The goal is to have the Plan completed by spring 2017.

Please address any questions related to this RFQ to Cynthia van Zelm, Executive Director, at 860.429.2740 or via e-mail at vanzelmca@mansfieldct.org.

Please see required Standard Terms and Conditions in Appendix B.

APPENDIX A: BACKGROUND

Storrs Center broke ground in May 2011. Phase 1 opened for business in August 2012, and the final phase will be completed in late 2016. Storrs Center is a pedestrian oriented, mixed-use town center at the cross-roads of the Town of Mansfield, Connecticut and the University of Connecticut. Located along Route 195/ Storrs Road adjacent to the University, the Town Hall, the regional high school, and the community center, Storrs Center includes Betsy Paterson Square across from the University's fine arts center and combines retail, restaurant, and office uses along with a variety of residence types. Storrs Center also includes several public infrastructure elements including a parking garage, transportation center, and local and state road construction and renovation.

As of November 2016, Storrs Center includes 618 apartments and 46 businesses. An additional three businesses will open by early 2017; three more spaces are left to lease. Thirty-eight of 42 townhomes and residential condominium units have been sold as of mid-December 2016. Approximately half of these homes are occupied.

For the past fifteen years, the Partnership has been the coordinator and the catalyst to develop Storrs Center. This role has included developing an initial master plan, followed by a comprehensive state approved Municipal Development Plan (including, but not limited to, a description of land use, financing plan, environmental analysis, and relocation plan); and selecting master developer LeylandAlliance LLC to implement the Municipal Development Plan. Along with this planning function, the Partnership also worked with LeylandAlliance to secure the various approvals needed for Storrs Center at the local, university, regional, and federal level.

To date, through the efforts of the Partnership, the Town of Mansfield has received over \$25 million in state and federal funding for the creation of Storrs Center, testament to the broad support for a project that will enhance the economic strength of the Town and the region while promoting environmental sustainability through careful planning, preservation, and density of uses.

In addition to the planning role of the Partnership, one of its key roles has been communication about and advocacy for Storrs Center. The community was engaged in the planning process at many levels – committee, public information, and individual meetings; surveys; charrettes; etc. Over the first ten years, over 400 public meetings were held. An advocacy group, Smart Growth for Mansfield, was formed to solidify support as the Storrs Center team worked to maintain momentum during the downturn in the economy in 2008. The Partnership has utilized all media formats including a newsletter, annual report, website, e-mail blasts, Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram.

Finally, the Partnership has also planned and run special events in the downtown including the Celebrate Mansfield Festival (completing its thirteenth year), Summer Concerts on the Square (nine concerts this past summer), Moonlight Movies (three family-friendly movies on Betsy Paterson Square), Trick or Treating, Winter Welcome, and the Tour de Mansfield Bike Tour.

With the opening of the first phase of Storrs Center in 2012, the Partnership Board of Directors recognized that it needed to reconsider its mission and role from establishing Storrs Center to managing, protecting, and enhancing a new civic asset for the benefit of the Town, UConn, and the community. A three-year transitional strategic plan and implementation plan was approved in early 2013.

APPENDIX A: BACKGROUND, continued

The Partnership's "Strategic Plan 2013 to 2015" included a new mission and vision statement that placed increased emphasis on the Partnership's management of Storrs Center and less emphasis on the Partnership's role in Four Corners and King Hill Road.

With the "Strategic Plan 2013-2015" as its guide, the Partnership focused its efforts on building operational capacity by developing an operations plan for Storrs Center with the Town of Mansfield, LeylandAlliance, rental housing partner EdR/The Oaks on the Square, and Hart Realty Advisers with The Wilder Companies as its property manager (*Note: In 2014, Hart Realty Advisers bought the developed commercial property in Storrs Center from LeylandAlliance on behalf of the Connecticut Retirement Plans and Trust Funds*). The operations plan addresses the maintenance of the parking garage, parking lots, sidewalks, roads, and the Town Square including clean-up and snow removal. The Partnership has taken the lead role in implementing the operations plan and ensuring that the downtown is safe, friendly, and clean.

In 2015, the Mansfield Town Council authorized the Partnership to manage the new Nash-Zimmer Transportation Center which includes local and regional bus service, a bike commuting club, and "Library Express," a small service branch of the Mansfield Public Library.

In 2016, the Partnership drafted ordinances and policies related to the operations of the downtown, with a focus on Betsy Paterson Square. The Partnership is responsible for implementing and enforcing these ordinances and policies.

The map illustrates the Storrs Center area, featuring the Main Street Homes Residential Neighborhood at the top. Key landmarks include the Greek Community Center and Greek Orthodox Church to the northwest, and the University of Connecticut, E.O. Smith High School, and Town Hall to the south. The Storrs Center Parking Garage is centrally located, surrounded by various buildings labeled with letters and numbers (A1-A7, B1-B12, C1-C12, D1-D2, E1-E4, F1-F4, H1-H4, J1-J5, K1, L1, M1-M3). Streets shown include Dog Lane, Royce Circle, Wilbur Cross Way, Storrs Road (Route 195), Bolton Road Ext., and Charles Smith Way. A north arrow is located in the top right corner.

<div>1 DOG LANE</div> <div>A1 Moe's Southwest Grill</div> <div>A2 7-Eleven</div> <div>A3 Froyoworld</div> <div>A4 Dog Lane Café</div> <div>A5 Subway</div> <div>A6 Insomnia Cookies</div> <div>A7 Mooyah Burgers & Fries</div>	<div>9 DOG LANE</div> <div>B1 Geno's Grille</div> <div>B2 Available Office/Retail</div> <div>B3 Horizon Travel</div> <div>B4 Head Husky Barber Shop</div>	<div>9 DOG LANE (cont.)</div> <div>B5 Bank of America ATM</div> <div>B6 Sweet Emotions Candy</div> <div>B7 Select Physical Therapy</div> <div>B8 Summit Technologies</div> <div>B9 The Flower Pot</div> <div>B10 Husky Pizza</div> <div>B12 Pandora's Playground</div> <div>Tattoo, Piercing & Gallery</div> <div>11 DOG LANE</div> <div>B13 Storrs Automotive</div>	<div>1 ROYCE CIRCLE</div> <div>C1 The UConn Café</div> <div>C2 Barnes & Noble at Storrs Center</div> <div>C3 Ballard Institute & Museum of Puppetry</div> <div>C4 Webster Bank</div> <div>C5 UConn Health Urgent Care</div> <div>C6 UConn Health Medical Center</div> <div>C7 Love Art Sushi</div> <div>C8 Available Office/Retail</div> <div>C9 E Fix & More</div> <div>C10 UConn Health Dental Services</div> <div>C11 Storrs Wine & Spirits</div> <div>C12 GBS Threading & Spa</div>	<div>8 ROYCE CIRCLE</div> <div>D1 CVS Pharmacy</div> <div>D2 Bruegger's Bagels & Jamba Juice</div> <div>12 ROYCE CIRCLE</div> <div>E1 Dunkin' Donuts</div> <div>E2 Gansett Wraps</div> <div>E3 Blaze Pizza</div> <div>E4 The Oaks on the Square</div> <div>33 WILBUR CROSS WAY</div> <div>F1 Grille 86</div> <div>F2 Kathmandu Kitchen</div> <div>F3 Tang Barbeque & Karaoke</div>	<div>33 WILBUR CROSS WAY (cont.)</div> <div>F4 CME Associates</div> <div>40 WILBUR CROSS WAY</div> <div>H1 Tea More Café</div> <div>H2 NICABM</div> <div>H3 Toasted</div> <div>H4 Amazon@Storrs</div> <div>34 WILBUR CROSS WAY</div> <div>J1/J2 Available Office/Retail</div> <div>J3 Bliss</div> <div>J4 Main Street Homes/Storrs Center Alliance</div>	<div>34 WILBUR CROSS WAY (cont.)</div> <div>J5 Available Office/Retail</div> <div>28 WILBUR CROSS WAY</div> <div>K1 Educational Playcare</div> <div>1220 STORRS ROAD</div> <div>L1 Price Chopper</div> <div>1206 STORRS ROAD</div> <div>M1 The UPS Store</div> <div>M2 Hair Cuttery</div> <div>M3 Wingstop</div>
--	---	--	---	--	--	--

APPENDIX C: STANDARD TERMS AND CONDITIONS

Consultants shall be aware of the following terms and conditions addressing Requests for Qualifications for the Partnership:

1. The Partnership does not expressly state or imply any obligation to reimburse firms for any expenses incurred in preparing submissions in response to this request.
2. The Partnership reserves the right to reject any or all submissions, to select a firm in a manner that is advantageous to the Partnership, and to waive any or all formalities in the bidding.
3. The Partnership does not and shall not discriminate on the basis of sex, race, color, creed, national origin, age, marital status, sexual orientation, or disability of the Consultant, its employees, or its contractors in the award to the successful Consultant.
4. The selected firm must be able to meet all Partnership, state, and federal affirmative action and equal employment opportunity practices and guidelines.
5. The Partnership reserves the right to reject any or all proposals, to consider alternatives, to award the contract to a Consultant in part or parts, to waive any informalities and irregularities, and to re-solicit proposals, at its sole discretion.
6. The Partnership reserves the right to conduct such investigations of and discussions with those who have submitted proposals ("Consultants") or other persons or entities as deemed necessary to assist in the evaluation of any proposal or to secure maximum clarification and completeness of any proposal.
7. All proposals submitted must be valid for a minimum period of sixty (60) days after the date of the proposal opening. Each Consultant must submit with the proposal a list of all subcontractors, independent contractors, or sub-consultants employed or proposed to be employed by the Consultant in the performance of the contract.
8. The Partnership reserves the right to select the most responsible and responsive proposal that it finds to be within the best interests of the Partnership, including the right to select a Consultant for reasons other than lowest price.
9. The Partnership makes no guarantees to any Consultant. The only obligations to be undertaken by the Partnership will be those contained in the negotiated contract with the successful Consultant.
10. All work product generated by Consultant will be the property of the Partnership, including without limitation all rights to reproduce, license, assign, sell, and otherwise use the work product in any form, size, format, or medium for any purpose. Consultant will convey and assign all rights of ownership and authorship in the work product to the Partnership.
11. The Consultant will agree not to discriminate through the services or activities made possible by or resulting from any future contract on the grounds of sex, race, color, creed, national origin, age (except minimum age and retirement provisions), marital status, sexual orientation, or disability. Any violation of this provision shall be considered to be a violation of a material provision of any future contract and shall be grounds for cancellation, termination, or suspension of said contract. The Consultant shall at all times, both in the proposal and in the contract process, comply with all applicable city, state, and federal anti-discrimination laws, rules, regulations, and requirements thereof.